AN ACT

AGAINST

Unlicenſed and Scandalous

Books and Pamphlets,

And for better Regulating of

PRINTING.

Die Jovis, 20 Septembr. 1649.

ORdered by the Commons aſſembled in Parliament, That this Act be forthwith printed and publiſhed.

Hen: Scobell, Cleric. Parliamenti.

London, Printed by *John Field* for *Edward Huſband*, Printer to the Parliament of *England*. 1649.

AN ACT

AGAINST

Unlicenſed and Scandalous

Books and Pamphlets,

And for better Regulating of

PRINTING.

Die Jovis, 20 Septembr. 1649.

Ordered by the Commons Aſſembled in Parliament, That this Act be forthwith printed and publiſhed.

Hen: Scobell, Cleric. Parliamenti.

London Printed by John Field for Edward Husband, Printer to the Parliament of England. 1649.

AN ACT

Against Unlicensed and Scandalous

Books and Pamphlets,

And for better Regulating of

PRINTING.

Whereas divers scandalous, seditious and libellous Pamphlets, Papers and Books are daily contrived, printed, vended and dispersed, with officious care and industry by the Malignant party at home and abroad, for the better compassing of their Wicked ends, The subversion of the Parliament and present Government, which they well know cannot with more ease be attempted, then by Lyes and false Suggestions, cunningly insinuated and spread amongst the People, and by malicious misrepresentation of things acted and done, to take off and divide their affections from that Just Authority which is set over them for their good and safety, and to bring a low and mean esteem upon the persons, and a suspition and hatred upon the courses

and intentions of the faithful Members of the Peoples Representative in Parliament, And of other Ministers of State, serving the Commonwealth in their several Subordinations; especially such who are most constant and conscientious in discharge of their Trust, and are therefore become the utmost object of their wretched spleen and malice: And whereas a great occasion of these mischiefs, and scandals, and dis-satisfaction of many, hath been as well the ignorance and assumed boldness of the weekly Pamphleteers, without leave or due Information, taking upon them to publish, and at pleasure to censure the Proceedings of Parliament and Army, and other Affairs of State; as also the irregularity and licentiousness of Printing, the Art whereof in this Commonwealth, and in all Forreign parts, hath been and ought to be restrained from too arbitrary and general an exercise: To prevent the many mischiefs inevitably following thereupon, The Parliament of England duly considering the premises, and willing to apply fit remedy herein, Do Enact and Ordain, and be it by the Authority aforesaid Enacted and Ordained, That the Laws made formerly, and at this present Parliament, now in force for punishment of devisers and spreaders of false and seditious News, Lyes and Rumors, by Writing, printing, speaking, or otherwise, shall be put in due and diligent execution, according to the tenor of the same Acts; And for further remedy, Be it Enacted and Ordained, That no person or persons whatsoever, shall presume to make, Write, print, publish, sell or utter, or cause to be made, printed or uttered, any scandalous or libellous Books, Pamphlets, Papers or Pictures whatsoever,

upon

upon the Penalties following; that is to say, The Author of such Books, Pictures or Papers, shall forfeit Ten pounds, or be Imprisoned in the Common Goal of the County or Liberty where the Offence is committed, or the Offender shall be found, until he shall pay the same, so that the Imprisonment exceed not forty days; The Printer to forfeit and pay five pounds, and suffer the like Imprisonment, until he pay the same, the said Imprisonment not exceeding twenty days, and likewise to have his Press and Implements of Imprinting seized, and broken in pieces; The Bookseller and Stationer to forfeit and pay Forty shillings, or be Imprisoned in like maner, until he pay the same, the Imprisonment not exceeding ten days. And be it further Enacted, That if any person happen to buy any such seditious, scandalous or libellous Pamphlets or Papers, and shall not within four and twenty hours after knowledge thereof, bring them to the Lord Major of London (if the buyers resiance be there) or to some other Justice of the Peace within the County, City or Liberty where such Buyers shall then happen to be, to be sent up, and disposed of as by this Act is afterwards mentioned, and give notice likewise of the party or parties of whom he or they had or bought the same, shall forfeit for every such omission the sum of Twenty shillings for every such concealed Paper, Pamphlet or Book, to be disposed of as is herein after mentioned. And for the prevention of false, imperfect and impertinent Relations of Parliamentary Proceedings, and other such Occurrences and News, the truth whereof may be fit to be known and published, for the satisfaction of all the good people of this Commonwealth

therein

therein intereſſed, and of all the well-affected thereto, in the clear Information of the ſtate of Affairs; Be it Enacted by the Authority aforeſaid, That no perſon whatſoever ſhall compoſe, write, print, publiſh, ſell or utter, or cauſe to be made, written, printed or uttered, any Book or Pamphlet, Treatiſe, ſheet or ſheets of News whatſoever, unleſs Licenſed (as is hereafter mentioned) upon the like Penalty as upon the Maker, Writer, Printer, Bookſeller and Stationer reſpectively of ſcandalous Books and Pamphlets, both for Fine and Impriſonment, is herein before limited and appointed. And be it further Enacted and Ordained, That the Offender aforeſaid ſhall be diſcovered, the Offences heard and examined, and the Penalties levied and diſpoſed of in ſuch ſort, maner and form as is limited, directed and expreſſed in an Ordinance of Parliament, made in Septemb. One thouſand ſix hundred forty and ſeven, Againſt Unlicenſed Pamphlets, and for the better Regulating of Printing. Provided, That ſo much of the ſaid Ordinance as ſpecifies the impoſition of Penalties upon ſuch Offenders as are before mentioned, in reſpect that higher Penalties are in ſtead thereof herein limited and deſigned, ſhall ſtand from henceforth Repealed, and be of no further effect. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforeſaid, that all former Licenſes granted by Authority of both or either Houſe of Parliament to any perſon or perſons, for Printing any Diurnal, News or Occurrences, ſhall be from henceforth void and of no further effect; And that no Book, Pamphlet, ſheet or ſheets of News or Occurrences whatſoever, ſhall henceforth be printed, bound, ſtitched or put to ſale by any perſon or perſons whatſoever, unleſs the ſame be

first

first approved of and Licensed under the hand of the Clerk of the Parliament, or of such person as shall be authorized by the Council of State for the time being, or (for so much as may concern the affairs of the Army) under the hand of the Secretary of the Army for the time being, the same to be entred in their several Registers, to be by them kept for that purpose; and also in the Register-Book of the Company of Stationers, according to ancient custom, and the Printer thereof to put his hand thereto. Provided always, and it is hereby Declared, That the penalties in this Act expressed, shall not extend to quit any person or persons, that shall make, Write, print, publish, sell or utter, or cause to be made, Written, published, sold or uttered, any Book, Pamphlet, Treatise, Ballad, Libel, sheet or sheets of News, that shall contain any Seditious, Treasonable or Blasphemous matter, but the offenders in such kinde shall be liable to such further penalties, as by the Laws of the Land are provided, or by Authority of Parliament shall be judged, according to the quality of such offences. And be it further Enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the Master and Wardens of the Company of Stationers London, assisted with such persons as the Council of State shall for that purpose nominate or approve, shall and may make diligent search in all places where they shall think meet, for all unallowed Printing-presses, and all Presses any way imployed in the printing of any such unlicensed Books, as aforesaid, or of any malignant, seditious or scandalous Books, Pictures or Papers, and to seize and carry away such Printing-presses and Letters, together with the Nut, Spindle, and other Materials of every such irregular

Printer,

Printer, which they finde so misimployed, unto the Common-Hall of the said Company, there to be defaced and made unserviceable, according to ancient custom: And likewise to make diligent search in all suspected Printing-houses, Warehouses, Shops, and other places, for such unlicensed and scandalous Books, Papers, Pamphlets, and all other such Books not entred, nor signed with the Printers name, and place of resiancy, being printed or reprinted by such as have no lawful interest in them, and the same to seize; and likewise to apprehend all Authors, Printers, and other persons whatsoever, imployed in compiling, printing, stitching, binding, publishing and dispersing of the said scandalous and unwarrantable Papers and Books, and all those who shall assist the said parties in searching after them; and to bring the offenders, and what they shall have so seized, before such Magistrate or other Officers as are appointed for the execution of this Act, to be by them ordered and disposed of according to the direction and true meaning of the same Act. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That no person or persons whatsoever, shall presume, by the Post, Carriers, or otherwise to convey, send away, or endeavor to disperse any such unlicensed News as aforesaid, or any seditious or scandalous Papers, Pamphlets, Books or Pictures, to any place, or person or persons, upon pain of forfeiture of forty shillings a piece for every such Book, Pamphlet or Paper, or Imprisonment of the offender, the same not to exceed forty days; the said penalty to be inflicted, paid and undergone, the moneys to be disposed of, and such inquiry, searches and seizures touching the same to be made, as in the case of

selling

selling unlicensed News is herein before limited and expressed. And whereas the great numbers of lewd and scandalous Pamphlets and seditious Books, have been chiefly occasioned by the multitude of Printing-houses, and Presses erected in by-places and corners, out of the eye of Government, contrary to the custom and practice of former times; and in that regard some further provision is held requisite for restraining and regulating that general excess and exercise of the Press, and prevention of the said Enormities, It is therefore further Enacted and Ordained by this present Parliament, and by the Authority thereof, That no Printer, nor any other person or persons whatsoever, shall from henceforth print, use or imploy any Printing-press, Rolling-press, or any other Instruments for Printing, in any part or place of this Commonwealth, save onely in the City of London, and Liberties thereof, and the two Universities (excepting such as shall be particularly Licensed and authorized by special Order of the Council of State) upon pain that all and every person and persons offending contrary hereunto, shall forfeit and pay the sum of Twenty pounds, and shall have all their Printing-presses, Letters and Materials defaced, and be for ever disabled to be a Master Printer, and Owner of a Printing-press: Provided, That this Clause shall not be construed to extend to the Printing-press now used in the City of York, nor to the Printing-press now used in Finsbury, for the Printing of Bibles and Psalms; but that the same shall be in like condition to all purposes, as if this Act had not been had or made. And it be further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That all and every

Printer, or other person or persons whatsoever in the said City of London, who now keep Printing-houses, or are Owners of Printing-presses, Rolling-presses, or other Instruments for Printing; as also the Owners of the Printing-press in Finsbury aforesaid, shall before the First day of October, One thousand six hundred forty nine, enter into Bond, with two Sureties, of Three hundred pounds penalty to the Keepers of the Liberties of *England* by Authority of Parliament, Not to print, nor cause to be printed, any seditious, scandalous or treasonable Pamphlet, Paper, Book or Picture, dishonorable to, or against the State and Government; nor any Pamphlet, Paper, or Book of News, not Licensed as aforesaid, and Entred in the Register Book of the said Company; nor suffer their Printing-presses, or other Instruments for Printing, to be used for any such unlawful purpose as aforesaid; and that he and they shall also to every Book, Pamphlet, Paper or Picture he or they shall imprint, in the Title-page of each Book prefix the Authors name, with his quality and place of Residence, or at least the Licensers names where Licenses are required, and his own Name and place of Residence at length, upon pain to forfeit the sum of Ten pounds for every wilful failing, and to have all his or their Printing materials defaced; and for the second Offence, to be disabled from any more exercise of his Trade of Printing: And that like caution shall be given by the Owner of the Press at York, to the Keepers of the Liberties of England as aforesaid, and by the Printers within either University, to the said Keepers of the Liberties of England, in like sum, and for like purposes, and upon like penalties for failing, as is herein

lastly

laſtly mentioned, Whereof the eſpecial care to ſee the ſame perfoꝛmed Within the time laſt beforꝛe limited, is eſpecially commended to the Lord Majoꝛ of York, and to the ſaid Vice-Chancellorꝛs reſpectively, of which they are under their Hands and Seals to make Certificate to the Councel of State, beforꝛe the Tenth day of October, One thouſand ſix hundꝛed fortꝛy nine. And be it further Enacted by the Authoꝛity aforeſaid, That no perſon oꝛ perſons Whatſoever, ſhall hereafter ſet up a Printing-preſs, Rolling-preſs, oꝛ other Inſtrument foꝛ Printing, noꝛ caſt any Printing Letters, beforꝛe they enter into Bond as aforeſaid; noꝛ ſhall any perſon oꝛ perſons demiſe oꝛ let, oꝛ being Within his oꝛ their diſpoſe, ſuffer to be held oꝛ uſed any Houſe, Vault, Cellar, oꝛ other Room whatſoever, to oꝛ by any perſon oꝛ perſons foꝛ a Printing-houſe, oꝛ place to print in, unleſs he oꝛ they ſo demiſing and ſuffering, ſhall firſt give notice to the Maſter oꝛ Wardens of the Stationers foꝛ the time being, of ſuch demiſes oꝛ ſuffering to Woꝛk oꝛ print there, upon pain of foꝛfeiture of Five pounds foꝛ every ſuch Offence; of Which intimation the Maſter and Wardens are hereby enjoyned to make an Entry in their Regiſter Book, upon like pain of foꝛfeiture of Five pounds foꝛ every omiſſion thereof. And be it further Enacted, That no Joyner, oꝛ Carpenter oꝛ other perſon, ſhall make any Printing-preſs oꝛ Rolling-preſs, noꝛ any Smith ſhall foꝛge any Iron-Woꝛk foꝛ a Printing-preſs, noꝛ any Founder caſt any Printing-letters foꝛ any perſon oꝛ perſons Whatſoever; neither ſhall any perſon oꝛ perſons impoꝛt, oꝛ cauſe to be impoꝛted oꝛ brought into this Cõmonwealth, from any parts beyond the ſeas, any Printing-preſs oꝛ preſſes, oꝛ any Letters

founded or cast, nor shall any person or persons buy any such Presses or Letters for printing, unless he or they respectively shall first acquaint the Master and the Wardens of the aforesaid Company for the time being, for whom the same Press, Iron Works or Letters are to be made, forged, imported, bought or cast, upon pain of forfeiture of five pounds for every such Offence; of which intimation the Master & Wardens are to make Entry in their said Register, upon like Penalty of forfeiture of Five pounds for every omission thereof. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That no person or persons whatsoever, shall Import any scandalous or seditious Books, Pamphlets or Papers, upon pain of forfeiture of five pounds for every such Book, Pamphlet or Paper; nor shall any person or persons land any Imported Books, at any Port or place of this Commonwealth, save onely at the Port of London; And that no Vitkats, Packs, Maunds, Chests, or Fardels of Books, be permitted by any Officers of the Customs or Excize to be opened or conveyed away, before notice given, and the same be viewed by the said Master and Wardens of the said Company, or such as they shall appoint, upon pain of forfeiture of Five pounds for every such Offence, so as the Master and Wardens or their Deputies, do make the said view within forty eight hours after such notice, which they are hereby required to make, upon pain of forfeiture of Five pounds for every omission of such view as aforesaid. And it is also Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That for the encouragement of all Regular Printers, and support of the said Manufactures in this Commonwealth, That no person or persons whatsoever,

ſoever, ſhall from henceforth Import, or bring in, or cauſe to be Imported or brought into this Commonwealth, from any part whatſoever, any Engliſh Bibles, Pſalms, or any Book or Books, or part of Book or Books formerly printed in this Commonwealth; nor ſhall binde, ſtitch, or put to ſale, any ſuch Book or Books, upon pain of loſs and forfeiture of the ſame, and of Ten ſhillings for every Book ſo imported, bound, ſtitched, or put to ſale. And be it further Enacted, That no perſon or perſons whatſoever in this Commonwealth, ſhall hereafter print or reprint any Book, Books, or part of any Book or Books, Legally granted to the ſaid Company of Stationers, for their relief or maintenance of their poor, without the Licenſe and conſent of the Maſter, Wardens and Aſſiſtants of the ſaid Company; nor any Book or Books, or part of Book or Books, now entred in the Regiſter Book of the ſaid Company, or which hereafter ſhall be duly entred in the ſaid Regiſter Book, for any particular Member of the ſaid Company without the like conſent of the owner or owners thereof, nor counterfeit the Name, Mark or Title of any Book or Books, belonging to the ſaid Company or particular members; nor ſhall any perſon or perſons binde, ſtitch or put to ſale any ſuch Book or Books, upon pain of forfeiture of the ſame, and of Six ſhillings and eight pence for every Book printed or ſtitched, bound or put to ſale contrary hereunto: And for the better diſcovery of Malignant Bookſellers, and others, who make a trade of vending, diſperſing and ſending to their Cuſtomers and Correſpondents in the Countrey in Packets, by the Poſt, Carriers,

and

and such like persons, divers unlicensed and other scandalous and seditious Books, Papers, Pamphlets and Pictures, to the great abuse of the Parliament, and prejudice of the People, Be it Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That any two Magistrates intrusted with the Execution of this Act respectively, shall have power upon any just occasion of suspition, to grant Warrants under their Hands and Seals, to some sufficient persons, to search Packs and Packets, and seize and bring away such Books, Papers and Pamphlets, to those who granted the said Warrants, to the end the Penalties may be levied upon the offenders, and disposed of according to the tenor and true meaning of this present Act. And be it Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That all unlicensed Books and Pamphlets of News, and all seditious, scandalous and libellous Books, Pamphlets, Pictures and Papers, to be seized by vertue of this Act, shall after the condemnation of the offender with whom they are taken, or to whom they belong (if the offender may be discovered and known) be brought, conveyed or sent, and safely delivered to the Secretary to the Councel of State, to be disposed of to the fire or otherwise, as that Councel shall direct, and be in the mean time safely preserved by the Officers or persons who seize the same, or by those to whom they make delivery thereof, and give account of their imployment, according to the true meaning of this Act. And whereas divers vagrant persons, of idle conversation, having forsaken their usual Callings, and accustomed themselves after the maner of Hawkers, to sell and cry about the streets, and in

other places, Pamphlets, and other Books, and under colour thereof, are found to disperse all sorts of dangerous Libels, to the intolerable dishonor of the Parliament, and the whole Government of this Commonwealth; Be it Ordained and Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That no such Hawkers shall be any more permitted; and that they and all Ballad-singers, wheresoever they are or may be apprehended, shall forfeit all Books, Pamphlets, Ballads and Papers by them exposed to sale, and shall, by such as shall by vertue of this Act seize upon them, be conveyed and carried to the House of Correction, there to be Whipt as common Rogues, and then dismissed; the Keepers of which House are hereby enjoyned to receive such prisoners, and see this penalty executed, without expecting further Warrant; and where no such House of Correction is, those who seize upon such offenders, shall deliver them over to the Constable of the Parish or Liberty where they are apprehended, who is forthwith to cause the offenders to be Whipt as common Rogues, upon pain of forfeiture of Forty shillings, to be paid by such Keepers of the House of Correction or Constable, omitting, neglecting or refusing to do their duty herein: The said offences in this clause mentioned to be examined, and the penalties levied, and to be disposed of in such sort and maner, as concerning the penalties of such as vend unlicensed and scandalous Books and Pamphlets, is herein before directed and expressed: And the Lord Major and Common Councel of the City of London, are hereby required to take care that the good Laws of their City against Hawkers,

and

and that this present Act against them and other offenders, be put in full and speedy execution within their City and Liberties thereof, as they tender the Honor thereof, and of Government: And all Constables, Headboroughs, and other Officers and Ministers, are hereby enjoyned to seize upon such last mentioned Offenders wheresoever they may be found, and to cause the penalties of the Law to be upon them executed, upon the penalty last before mentioned. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That whatsoever penalties in money shall be levied and received by the pains, industry and prosecution of the Company of Stationers (whose vigilancy and care herein is especially required) shall be disposed of as followeth; viz. After satisfaction of their charges in inquiry and prosecution, the one moyety of the residue shall be by them received and reserved for the use of the poor of their Company; and the other moyety, or one half, for the use of the Commonwealth, to be yearly by them answered, and paid into the receipt of the publique Exchequer: And the Justices of the Upper Bench, Justices of Oyer and Terminer, within the limits of their Commission, Justices of Assize in their several Circuits, Justices of Goal Delivery, and Justices of Peace, as well within the Liberties as without, within the limits of their several Commissions in their general Sessions, or other Sessions, which they or any two or more of them (whereof one of them to be of the Quorum) may and shall appoint at their pleasure, where and when need shall require, shall by vertue hereof have full power and authority, and are hereby strictly enjoyned to enquire,

enquire, hear and determine all and every the Offences aforesaid, and to give in charge the Presentment of the same; and they and all other Officers and Ministers concerned, are hereby enjoyned and required to be careful and diligent in the discharge of their duty in the premises, according to the tenor and direction of this present Act: And all Officers Civil and Military, Soldiers, and other well-affected people, are hereby specially enjoyned to be ayding and assisting to the execution of this Act, and to seize upon the persons of all such as shall presume to rescue, or actually endeavor to rescue from apprehension or punishment the offenders against this Act, to cause such Countenancers and Disturbers to be immediately brought before some Justice of the Peace, who is to binde them by a Recognizance with good Sureties to the Good Behavior, and to appear at the next Sessions for the Peace, there to be Indicted, Fined, and further dealt with, according to Law, and as the quality of such High Contempts may deserve: And such said Offenders as are not able to finde Sureties, are to be caused to be set in the Stocks near to the place where the Offence was committed, and to be Imprisoned there for the space of four hours. And because the life of all good Laws, is the due execution thereof, and that the careful observance of this Act, and a strict enquiry into, and punishment of Offenders against the same, will be of especial concernment for the Peace and safety of this Commonwealth, Be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That the Council of State appointed

by the Parliament, shall hereby have power and authority to enquire into, and from time to time to receive an accompt of all Wilful defaults and contempts of Officers or others, who neglecting or refusing to do their duties, shall thereby obstruct the Remedies provided by this Act; and are hereby enjoyned and required, by all good Ways and means to remove such obstructions, and out of the penalties or otherwise, to reward prosecutors or discoverers of Offenders, and to cause this Act to be put in full and effectual execution. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That in and upon any Action, Plaint or Suit to be brought against any Officer, or person or persons, for any thing by them acted or done by force of this present Act, every such Officer and person shall and may plead the General Issue thereto, and give this Act, and the whole special matter in Evidence; and if the Verdict pass against the Plaintiff or Plaintiffs, or the Plaintiff or Plaintiffs become non-Suit, or suffer any Discontinuance thereof, That then the Defendant and Defendants shall recover his and their double Costs for their Wrongful veration in defence of the said Action or Suit, for which he and they shall have like remedy, as in other cases where Costs by the Laws of this Commonwealth are given to the Defendants: Provided always, and be it Enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no person or persons shall be molested or impeached for any the Offences mentioned in this Act, unless he or they be thereof accused within six moneths after his or their Offence so committed or done. Provided also, That this Act be in force, and to have continuance until the

the Nine and twentieth day of September, which shall be in the year of our Lord, One thousand six hundred fifty and one, and no longer.

Die Jovis, 20 *Septembr.* 1649.

ORdered by the Commons assembled in Parliament, That this Act be forthwith printed and published.

Hen: Scobell, Cleric. Parliamenti.